



## The Star-Ledger

### U.S. must take the lead to end Darfur genocide

Thursday, April 14, 2005

**BY JON S. CORZINE AND SAM BROWNBACK**

Never before have we been so aware of mankind's horrible history and yet so reluctant to act on its lessons. Last week, we commemorated the Rwandan genocide of 1994. And with the movie "Hotel Rwanda" showing on thousands of screens across the country, we recall our shameful failure to prevent the slaughter of 800,000 people.

In January, the liberation of Auschwitz was commemorated by Congress and by a special session of the United Nations General Assembly. The meaning of this history has not been lost on our leaders. As Vice President Dick Cheney said at Holocaust commemorations in Poland, "(W)e look to the future with hope -- that He may grant us the wisdom to recognize evil in all its forms ... and give us the courage to prevent it from ever rising again."

Tragically, we have seen little courage in preventing the genocide that rages in Darfur. Estimates of the death toll in Darfur range from 180,000 to more than 300,000. Killings, torture, destruction of villages, rape and other forms of sexual violence continue. More than 1.8 million people have been forced from their homes, and unless the attacks subside and access by humanitarian organizations improves, as many as 3 million Sudanese people could be displaced.

The genocide, recognized last year by Congress and the Bush administration, continues. The government of Sudan is supporting Janjaweed militias and participating in attacks on civilians. Helicopter gunships strafe villages, spraying nail-like flachettes unsuitable for anything other than killing. Members of the African Union force deployed to Darfur have been attacked, and government-backed militias have threatened foreigners and U.N. convoys. In recent weeks, an American aid official was shot and wounded and the U.N. was forced to withdraw its international staff in west Darfur to the provincial capital.

How has the international community responded? In the last few weeks, the U.N. Security Council passed two tepid resolutions that failed to impose, or even seriously threaten, sanctions against Sudan. Instead, the Security Council promised development assistance and "trade access" as rewards for implementation of the January peace agreement between Khartoum and the south, with no conditions related to Darfur. The Security Council condemned air attacks but failed to authorize a military no-fly zone over Darfur.

The Sudanese government remains free to import arms. A mechanism was established to prevent the travel of those determined to be responsible for crimes against humanity, but efforts to freeze the assets of those people were eviscerated. One positive development was a decision to hold those responsible for atrocities accountable in the International Court of Justice. Despite disagreements about the court, this breakthrough was an important and necessary warning to Sudan, which opposes all accountability.

But stopping the genocide will require boots on the ground. The Security Council has authorized 10,000 troops to police the north-south agreement, but their future role in Darfur remains vague. Meanwhile, the African Union force has not been granted a mandate to protect civilians. Nor have the United States, its allies or the U.N. fully acknowledged, much less addressed, the inability of a few thousand African Union troops to patrol a region the size of Texas.

One month ago, we introduced the Darfur Accountability Act -- now co-sponsored by a bipartisan group of 22 senators -- which included specific policies and initiatives to stop the genocide. Recognizing that multilateral action would require concerted diplomatic efforts, the bill also called on the administration to

raise Darfur in all relevant bilateral and multilateral forums. Unfortunately, there were no indications that Darfur was discussed in meetings between President Bush and Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac. The use of NATO assets to enforce a no-fly zone over Darfur did not apparently come up in a meeting of NATO leaders.

The recent public vetting of disagreements between Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin last month did not include Russia's opposition to U.N. sanctions against Sudan. And Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met the Chinese premier and president with no public mention of continued Chinese opposition to Security Council action on Darfur. Finally, Kofi Annan has failed to call for meaningful sanctions against Khartoum or promote an intervention that could protect civilians.

The people of Darfur are dying at a rate of at least 10,000 a month, yet world leaders do not have the courage to discuss the genocide. The United States has done more to bring awareness to the crisis than any other nation, but only unrelenting, consistent engagement will stop the killing.

The United States should mobilize a "coalition of conscience" and impose sanctions against Sudan. We should work to enforce a NATO no-fly zone over Darfur. We should be using all diplomatic tools to pressure other countries and call them out on their inaction and disregard for human rights.

The United States must be one of the leaders in this effort, working to secure commitments for a robust intervening force that will protect civilians. When we repeat the phrases "never again" and "not this time," we cannot merely stand idly by. Words must be backed by significant and measurable action, and we are wasting precious time and precious lives.

*Jon S. Corzine is a Democratic senator from New Jersey and a candidate for governor. Sam Brownback is a Republican senator from Kansas.*

© 2005 The Star Ledger

© 2005 NJ.com All Rights Reserved.